

# DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-GS2(Governance)Page1

## Same-sex marriage: SC rejects review of judgment

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice B.R. Gavai, on Thursday rejected petitions seeking a review of an October 2023 judgment which refused to legalise same-sex

- The Supreme Court of India rejected petitions seeking to review an October 2023 judgment that refused to legalize same-sex marriage.
- The five-judge Bench, led by Justice B.R. Gavai, found no errors in the previous judgments and dismissed the review petitions. The judges on the Bench included Justices Surya Kant, B.V. Nagarathna, and Dipankar Datta.
- The petitions argued that the verdict forced same-sex couples to live dishonest lives, but the court upheld its decision, stating that the matter should be left to government policy and legislative debate.
- The court dismissed the plea for a hearing in open court, asserting that Parliament was the appropriate forum for discussing the legal status of same-sex marriage.

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## PM to open Z-Morh tunnel, key feature in year-round Kashmir-Ladakh corridor

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

The Z-Morh tunnel is set to become the first major milestone in the effort to build a strategic corridor between Kashmir and Ladakh which is open all through the year, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi slated to inaugurate it on January 13.

The tunnel, in Ganderbal district, is key to keeping the tourist destination of Sonamarg open for visitors around the year. Earlier, snowfall and avalanches



The tunnel in Ganderbal district would keep the tourist destination of Sonamarg open for visitors around the year. FILE PHOTO

This will be Mr. Modi's first visit to Kashmir since an elected government

the Valley, especially in Srinagar, has been stepped up and additional checkpoints set up on the main roads.

Hoteliers are enthusiastic about the tunnel. "It was much needed to have Sonamarg on the winter tourism map of Kashmir. There is a need to open up new winter destinations in Kashmir given the growing footfall. It would be safe to drive to Sonamarg in winters now," said Sajid Majeed, a hotelier.

At present, most hotels remain closed because of

- The Z-Morh tunnel in Ganderbal district is set to become a key part of a strategic corridor between Kashmir and Ladakh, providing year-round access to the tourist destination of Sonamarg. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the tunnel on January 13.
- This will be his first visit to Kashmir since the formation of an elected government in the Union Territory. Security measures have been heightened in preparation for the visit.
- The tunnel is expected to boost winter tourism in Sonamarg, which was previously inaccessible in winter due to snowfall and avalanches



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## India releases compilation of 10,000 human genomes from 83 population groups

The 'Genome India' database will be available to researchers across the world; it will serve as a template for investigations into disease, drug therapy; PM says it will strengthen biotech economy

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

India has completed and made available a year-long compilation of 10,000 human genomes representing 83 population groups, making up about 2% of the country's 4,600 population groups, as a database. This collection will serve as a template of future investigations into disease and drug therapy.

The 'Genome India' database, as it is known, will now be available to researchers across the world for investigation and is housed at the Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC), in Faridabad, Haryana.

A first analysis of the genomes estimates around 27 million low-frequency (or relatively rare) variants, with 7 million of them not found in similar reference databases around the world. Genetic population



A major focus of the Indian reference genomes is to have researchers study diseases. GETTY IMAGES

cadecades, many countries have created databases of the genomes of their population – for a variety of purposes including estimating disease risks, adverse drug reactions, establishing genealogy and DNA-profiling databases.

However, a major focus

ment that will adhere to data sharing and privacy policies. Though the database stores information on population groups, this data will not be classified by the names of castes or tribes but will be numerically coded, Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, told *The Hindu*.

Describing the project as "historic", Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a video address, said this paved the way for India strengthening the biotechnology economy as well as biotechnology-based manufacturing.

Experts said that while only a small fraction of India's population groups were studied, the door was open to expanding the database to a million genomes. "Though costs are a limiting factor, a million would dramatically scale insight into India's genetic diversity," said Homayun

– they hold the potential for targeted clinical interventions, advancing precision medicine for better healthcare," said Union Minister of State (independent charge) for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh, at an event here to announce the project.

- India has completed a year-long compilation of 10,000 human genomes, representing 83 population groups, which is about 2% of the country's 4,600 population groups. This database, called the 'Genome India' database, is now available to researchers worldwide and is housed at the Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC) in Faridabad, Haryana.
- The initial analysis of the genomes identified around 27 million low-frequency variants, with 7 million of these not found in global reference databases. This project aims to facilitate research into disease and drug therapy, advancing precision medicine for better healthcare. Access to the database requires a proposal reviewed by an independent panel to ensure adherence to data sharing and privacy policies.

## The Hindu-IR (GSII)

### India to sign mining pact with Mongolia soon: govt. source

**Reuters**  
NEW DELHI

India is expected to sign a preliminary agreement with Mongolia soon in the area of geology and exploration, a senior Indian government official with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Landlocked Mongolia is rich in deposits of copper and coking coal, and India is mostly dependent on imports to meet rising demand for the red metal used in power, construction and electrical vehicles as well as coking coal for steel-making.

"India's cabinet has approved the MoU (memorandum of understanding) and both countries are expected to sign it soon," the source said, declining to be identified as the deliberations are not yet public.

**Adani, Hindalco and Vedanta have expressed interest in sourcing copper from Mongolia, the source said**

seeking comments on the issue.

Companies such as Adani, Hindalco and Vedanta have expressed an interest in sourcing copper from Mongolia, the source said. All three companies did not respond to emails from Reuters seeking comment.

Both Indian and Mongolian officials are working out supply routes for Indian companies to source copper and coking coal, with India preferring the route from Vladivostok in Russia despite the longer distance, the official said.

"China is convenient

- India is soon expected to sign a preliminary agreement with Mongolia in the area of geology and exploration, according to a senior Indian government official. Mongolia, rich in copper and coking coal deposits, can help meet India's rising demand for these resources. The Indian cabinet has approved the MoU, and both countries are expected to sign it soon.
- Companies like Adani, Hindalco, and Vedanta have shown interest in sourcing copper from Mongolia. Indian and Mongolian officials are working on supply routes, with India preferring the route from Vladivostok in Russia. Mongolia is believed to offer superior grades of coking coal.

Indian Express-Economy(GSIII)-Page 8

## Centre links farmer ID to PM-Kisan, makes it a must for new applicants

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9

THE CENTRE has made it mandatory for new applicants to obtain a farmer ID for enrolment into the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) to get benefits under the scheme.

The move by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare to make farmer ID mandatory for registering new beneficiaries under the PM-Kisan is significant as it receives about 2 lakh new applications monthly. "This farmer ID guarantees that the applicant-farmer owns the land, and thus, the PM-KISAN registration process would be vastly simplified," said a source, adding that it will ease the process for farmers to avail themselves of the benefits of the Central scheme.

According to sources, all new applicants for the PM-Kisan scheme will have to get registered with the Farmers' Registry and provide their farmer ID in the application form. This system has come into force across 10 states for any new applicant with effect from January 1, 2025, said the sources.

The agriculture ministry has sent a communication to these 10 states, said the sources. In the remaining states, it will be made mandatory at a later date, they added. The 10 states in which farmer ID has been made mandatory for registration of new beneficiaries under the PM-Kisan are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. These 10 states account for about 84 per cent (9.25 crore) of 11 crore PM-Kisan beneficiaries.

The Indian government has made it mandatory for new applicants to obtain a farmer ID for registration under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme. Purpose of Farmer ID: The farmer ID ensures that the applicant owns land, simplifying the registration process for PM-Kisan and making it easier for farmers to avail scheme benefits.

Implementation in 10 States: Starting January 1, 2025, the farmer ID requirement is effective in 10 states: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The scheme provides Rs 6,000 per annum in three installments to eligible farmer families



## Indian Express-Economy(GSIII)-Page 1

### Pressure on rupee to ease, India to grow at 6.6%: UN

**RAVI DUTTA MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9

INDIA'S ECONOMY is projected to grow by 6.6 per cent in 2025, largely driven by strong private consumption and investment, while pressures on the domestic currency are expected to ease, the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) report released on Thursday said.

The Indian rupee has remained under pressure due to the strengthening US dollar, hitting a lifetime low of 85.93 against the dollar on Thursday. This has contributed to a fall in India's foreign exchange reserves, which dropped to an

eight-month low of \$640.28 billion in December.

"In the near term, depreciation pressure on South Asian currencies is expected to ease, as monetary loosening in the United States has increased the attractiveness of both direct and portfolio investments in the region's economies," the report stated.

The report also highlighted that easing inflationary pressures across South Asia have allowed most central banks in the region to halt monetary tightening or continue reducing policy rates in 2024.

The RBI has kept its policy rate at 6.5 per cent since February 2023, as inflation risks have persisted. In contrast, Pakistan and Sri Lanka's central

banks have cut their key policy rates to support economic recovery, while Bangladesh has continued its tightening cycle to address inflationary pressures arising from weaker agricultural production, supply chain disruptions, and currency depreciation.

#### Capex push working

The UN report further said that capital expenditure on infrastructure development is expected to have strong multiplier effects on India's growth in the coming years. Additionally, robust export growth in services and select goods, particularly pharmaceuticals and electronics, will support economic activity.

"Expansion in the manufacturing and services sectors will

continue to drive the economy throughout the forecast period. Meanwhile, favourable monsoon rains in 2024 have improved summer-sowing conditions for all major crops, boosting agricultural output expectations for 2025," the report added.

#### Substantial gender gap

Despite progress in female labour market participation in India, the UN report highlighted that substantial gender gaps remain. Labour market indicators remained strong in the second quarter of 2024. Urban unemployment stood at 6.6 per cent during this period, virtually unchanged from the 6.7 per cent rate recorded in 2023. However, the report stressed that significant

gender disparities persist in India's labour market.

#### Critical minerals

The report also pointed out that India possesses substantial untapped reserves of critical minerals. "Countries such as Brazil (rare earth elements and nickel), Vietnam (bauxite and rare earth elements), the United Republic of Tanzania (graphite), Mexico (copper), and India (rare earth elements) have vast reserves of critical minerals but currently account for only a small share of global production," the report stated. Mining-dependent economies are in a strong position to leverage these resources, the report concluded. **FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) report released

- India's economy is projected to grow by 6.6% in 2025, driven by strong private consumption and investment. **Currency Pressure:** The Indian rupee has been under pressure due to the strong US dollar, hitting a low of 85.93 against the dollar and leading to a drop in foreign exchange reserves to \$640.28 billion.
- **Currency Depreciation:** Depreciation pressure on South Asian currencies is expected to ease due to monetary loosening in the US, making investments in the region more attractive.
- **Inflation and Policy Rates:** Easing inflationary pressures in South Asia have allowed most central banks to halt monetary tightening or continue reducing policy rates. The RBI has kept its policy rate at 6.5% since February 2023.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air-Places(GSI)

### Egypt Announces New Archaeological Discoveries Near Luxor



- In Egypt, archaeologists have unearthed significant finds near Luxor, including parts of a temple linked to Queen Hatshepsut.
- Egypt is located in northeastern Africa, with an extension in the Sinai Peninsula. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, Sudan to the south, the Red Sea to the east, and Libya to the west.





# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## Air-IR(GSII)

### India-EU Reiterate Their Commitment To Promote & Protect Human Rights



- India and the European Union reiterated their commitment to the shared principles and values of democracy, freedom, rule of law and to the promotion and protection of all Human Rights during 11th India – European Union Human Rights Dialogue in New Delhi today. The Dialogue was co-chaired by Joint Secretary (Europe West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Piyush Srivastava and Ambassador of the European Union to India, Hervé Delphin.
- Both sides agreed on the need to safeguard the freedom, independence and diversity of civil society actors and organisations and other relevant stakeholders such as journalists, respecting freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly. The EU reiterated its opposition to capital punishment. India reiterated its stand on recognition of the Right to Development as a distinct, universal, inalienable and fundamental human right.
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